



Issue One

From the Desk of the President

A new year, a new Talbot County Council and a new opportunity for the Council to speak to our constituents about topics and issues within Talbot County. This is first in a series of quarterly columns speaking to you openly and frankly about activities happening in the County government, including reporting on the County Council's decisions and considerations without slant or partiality. We'll also celebrate the accomplishments and advancements of County employees and volunteers, as well as share in the pains and losses that come along with life. We hope this column will be enlightening, enjoyable and give you a little more insight into your County government.

First at bat, the Council presented lifelong County resident, baseball hero and all-around great guy Harold Baines with a Certificate of Recognition; highlighting his election into Major League Baseball's Hall of Fame. Harold is a humble man, who walks softly and, in his time, swung a big bat. Harold has been on the biggest stages in life, yet never forgot his home town and the people who contributed to his life and helped to make him a powerful slugger. The Council will be placing a plaque on the hallway wall leading to the Council offices honoring all he has done for Talbot County. Please stop by and view it.

Another native son who the Council honored recently is Frederick Douglass. To celebrate the 200th birthday of Douglass, the Council broke ground on the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe in February 2018. Descendants of Douglass, State dignitaries and friends joined the Council in dedicating the park, which sits just south of the Town of Queen Anne and across the river from Caroline County. The Council recently appointed an Advisory Committee to help with the planning and design of the park. Economic Development and Tourism Director Cassandra Vanhooser has already secured a grant from the State to a master plan and interpretive plan to help tell the story of Frederick Douglass. Please stay tuned for more information on the park's development.

The Talbot County Parks and Recreation Department joined again with the Town of Easton Parks and Recreation, the YMCA of the Chesapeake, the Cambridge Police Department, the Easton Police Department, the Denton Police Department, and the County Sheriff's Department to sponsor the 13th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Basketball Classic. The MLK Classic has been bringing together area youth from the Tri-County area to celebrate the life and legacy of this extraordinary American hero since 2006. The MLK Classic allows youth from different neighborhoods to come together for one day to play as a team and interact with law enforcement officers in a positive atmosphere. The MLK Classic also acknowledges the current efforts of local citizens who are continuing the work of Dr. King. This year, the

MLK Image Award recognized Yvonne Freeman (Easton), Doncella Young (Denton), Wayne Cole (Federalburg) and Ray Washington (Cambridge) for their continued efforts in "Keeping the Dream Alive."

Recruitment and retention for our County's voluntary fire departments remain one of the highest priorities as the Council goes into the 2019 annual fire department banquet season. Some departments reported a slight increase in the number of applications for entry-level recruits. Yet, many departments are still facing a shortage in the number of trained and available firefighters needed to respond to calls. The Council will continue funding for the recruitment of new firefighters, as well as the retention of valuable seasoned veterans. The Council also mourned the loss of three members of the firefighter family. Station 60 acknowledged the passing of veteran firemen Ed Mullikin and Les Chance in November and January, and Station 80 faced the hardship of losing Assistant Fire Chief Danny Lister in September. The Council is committed to continuing to work with our local fire departments to address the increasing cost of emergency equipment, as well as the demands of required training. Please consider being a part of something special, contact your local fire station today.

The Council has been meeting with elected officials from the five incorporated towns in the County, three times each year to discuss mutual issues. Ray Clarke, the County Engineer, has been working closely with the Town of St. Michaels to repair and replace decaying sewer lines. St. Michaels is the only municipality connected to a County-owned wastewater treatment plant. Here, the County is working on coordination with Town officials to ensure that road closures due to repair work do not severely impact Town residents. Recently, the County worked with the Town of Trappe to provide needed grant funding to connect several residents with failing septic systems to the Town-owned treatment plant. The County is continuing working with the Town of Easton to complete the widening of Goldsborough Neck Road to handle future truck traffic using the developing Mistletoe Hall Industrial Park.

When the Village of Tilghman Island lost its only bank, last year the Council stepped up to work out an agreement with 1880 Bank to construct an interactive teller machine (ITM). Different from the traditional ATM, the ITM allows the user to see a teller on a screen and answer banking questions in real time. The banking kiosk is located on the east side of the Knapps Narrows Bridge adjacent to the County's Back Creek Park. Another improvement in Tilghman was the recent dredging of the Knapps Narrows, which had been long overdue. This has provided much-needed relief to local watermen using the waterway to enter the Bay.

We welcome back Clay Stamp to overseeing emergency operations for the County, as well as lending his administrative support to County Manager Andrew Hollis. Clay was tapped by Governor Hogan first to head the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) in 2015. After a brief stint with the Governor, he returned to open arms of the County, only to be called away by the Governor again in 2016 to head the newly formed Opioid Operation Command Center. Clay's experience and expertise in the field of emergency services and preparedness gives Talbot County the best chance to face the ever-changing emergency services field.

The Council also wishes to congratulate Councilwoman Laura Price for her recent selection to the MACO Board of Directors.

Finally, the budget season is here again. The Council has already set aside several dates for budget deliberations and will be meeting with Angela Lane the County Finance Director to review the County's

balance sheet against the operational needs of County departments. The Council is facing many capital projects that will need to be funded, several of these projects will be discussed in future articles.

We look forward to updating you again in May.

Corey Pack, Talbot County Council President